



# *The Virginia Saltwater Review*

*Plans and Statistics Department*  
2600 Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor  
Newport News, VA 23607-0756  
<http://www.mrc.virginia.gov>

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by

**Department of Plans and Statistics, Fisheries Management Division**

## **OVERVIEW**

Perhaps we should come up with a nickname for our big summertime “trio:” croaker, spot, and flounder. Even when inshore fishing has slowed, those three come up in almost every report from every location! So, you can be confident that you will find croaker, spot, and flounder in Virginia waters this time of year.



Offshore action is hot with bluefin tuna citations in the 150-pound range. Dolphin and sailfish have also been reported. But the news of the week is the new certified state record 20-pound, 10-ounce blueline tilefish. This fish was caught by Kenneth Bowe of Chester, Virginia. The Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament certified the record-setting blueline which bested the existing state record of 20 pounds, 4 ounces set by David Akridge of Virginia Beach.

Bowe made his record catch in approximately 400 feet of water near the Norfolk Canyon while fishing aboard a 30-foot private boat, skippered by Michael Adkins. The fish had a total length of 31 inches and a girth of 24-3/4 inches. The record fish was caught on a simple bottom rig baited with a combination of squid and ballyhoo. Two other blueline tilefish in excess of 20 pounds were boated on the same trip. For more information about the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament, contact Lewis S. Gillingham at (757) 491-5160 or [vswft@mrc.virginia.gov](mailto:vswft@mrc.virginia.gov)

## **THE FISHING REPORT**

### **Chincoteague**

Donna, at Captain Bob's, reports that inshore, anglers are catching flounder, despite loads of croaker in the area. Hotspots include the canal across from Chincoteague Point, the Assateague Channel, and the Chincoteague Channel from Buoy 17 to BeeBee Road. Nice flounder also came from off of Daisy's Dockside and the Black Narrows Marsh. Snapper bluefish are moving throughout the area, specifically in the Chincoteague Channel and the south side of the Queen's Sound Bridge. Black sea bass are around as well. Kingfish, along with a mix of croaker, spot, sandshark, skate, snapper bluefish, and an occasional flounder have been found from the surf. The Lumpy Bottom is hot with big bluefin tuna. The small ones have been 95 pounds, and the largest was 155 pounds! Most are in the 130- to 155-pound range. Successful anglers have been split between chunking and trolling for the tuna. There were 12 bluefin tuna citations last week, and a few yellowfin tuna citations came in as well. The yellowfin size is improving (50 to 60 pounds). Blackfish Banks and the Subway Cars are producing so well that anglers are maxing out on spadefish and large flounder with a few triggerfish mixed in. One cobia (28 pounds) was found near the Parking Lot, and dolphin (up to 22 pounds) were doing really well in the same area.

### **Onancock**

Captain Wil of Onancock reports that croaker are difficult to find during the day, but are available in the evening hours. Small sea mullet and shark were reported. Few keeper flounder have been caught, but those that are landed are decent sized. They have been found around the edges in 30 to 40 feet of water. Spot were biting as well. Bluefish are out, but they are small, and no trout have been spotted yet in the area.

### **Wachapreague**

Croaker have moved into the Wachapreague Inlet, along with spot and a few flounder, according to staff at the Wachapreague Marina. Keeper flounder are hard to find, but some were landed from the offshore wrecks. Marlin and tuna were reported from the Lumpy Bottom and other offshore areas.

Staff at Captain Zed's reports large numbers of bluefin tuna. Nine bluefin tuna citations were awarded last week for fish ranging from 126 to 157 pounds. Flounder are abundant in the area, but few are keepers. Croaker are moving in, and they are starting to increase in size.

### **Cape Charles**

According to Staff at Chris' Bait and Tackle, the Concrete Ships at Kiptopeke and the waters near Oyster are providing good croaker action. Flounder were found at Buoy 42 and the 4<sup>th</sup> island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Spadefish were caught at the Plantation Light and the 4<sup>th</sup> island, and anglers were still finding cobia between Buoys 13 and 16 last week.

At Cherrystone Bait and Tackle, campers are having fun with bottom fish catches, even though the fish

aren't very large. Flounder are around with few keepers, but the croaker are picking up in number and size.

### **Lower Bay/Bridge Tunnel**

Flounder, spot, and croaker were biting around Cobb's Marina this week.

At the Sunset Boating Center, croaker and flounder were reported at the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel.

A few flounder citations were reported from Salt Pond's Marina. One was an 8-pound, 2 ounce flat fish (27 inches) caught by Al Muire at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Anglers in the area have reported good flounder fishing in the Lynnhaven Inlet.

It was a quiet week at the York River Fishing Center; however, the flounder bite has picked up. Cobia fishing has died down in the area, but spot and croaker are available. The Gloucester Point Pier produced the usual mixed bag of flounder, spot, and croaker.

Ken Neill, reporting secretary for the Peninsula Anglers Club, contributed the following:

Both cobia and flounder are going full force in the Chesapeake Bay. Trophy-sized flounder are coming from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, the Cell and Buoy 43, around Back River Reef, and Buoy 36A. Some flounder fishermen have been in for a surprise when a big cobia decides to eat one of their flounder baits. Cobia are being caught by both chumming and sight fishing. The Inner Middle Ground and the Hump have been good cobia spots lately. Large red drum have been a surprise catch for some cobia fishermen. Black drum are schooled up around the islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Sheepshead and spadefish are both available along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Spanish mackerel are available all over the lower Chesapeake Bay and along the oceanfront. Cape Henry and Sandbridge have been good areas. Triggerfish are being caught from around the islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and over the near shore wrecks. A few large king mackerel have been caught along the Virginia Beach oceanfront. Amberjack continue to swarm the southern towers. Offshore action is a good mixed-bag fishery. Billfish are turning on with white marlin popping up everywhere. Bluefin tuna are being encountered over the inshore humps on out to the 30-Fathom Curve. Yellowfin tuna have become a more difficult catch, but the ones being caught are a nice class. Dolphin fishing is very good, and there are decent numbers of wahoo around. A few bigeyes are out there to bust up tackle around the Norfolk Canyon.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

The mid-summer fishing is going strong. With good weather paired with a little luck, the week looks promising for anglers hitting the water. The main interest still centers around cobia, and the old standby, flounder. Cobia hunters are finding steady action in the lower Bay. Although plenty of keeper fish are around, several fish are pushing 60+ pounds. Latimer Shoal and the Nine Foot Shoal are producing well for those dumping chum and bottom fishing with both cut and live bait. The Baltimore Channel area is producing for top water casters. In a few weeks, these fish will begin gathering on bridge pilings and buoys.

Flounder, which are often out of season right now are up for grabs, and are happy to oblige. Most

folks are reporting modest catches, but quality fish. Although the number of trophy doormats is down this week, decent fish ranging from 3 to 7 pounds are making the trip worthwhile. Best results are coming from those offering live bait near bridge pilings and the tubes of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, lower bay wrecks, Back River Reef, and near the Cell in around 40 to 50 feet of water. Peanut bunker is working better than spot right now, although both baits are good choices.

The folks at Chris' Bait and Tackle report that tarpon anglers are still awaiting the reemergence of the silver king. According to the experts, the cooler water temperatures are taking the brunt of the blame for absent sightings, rollings, and hookups. In the meantime, anglers are heading to Oyster to partake in the excellent croaker run, with the "Chimney" and Buoy 7 areas providing the best action. Within lower Bay waters, croaker are everywhere from the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. The area off Kiptopeke State Park is also a favorite location lately.

Spadefish are still available at the Chesapeake Light Tower, the Tower Reef, nearshore and inshore wrecks, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and the Cell. Plantation Light is also producing quality fish this week. Sheepshead peaked some interest this week, with big fish coming from the Bay Bridge Tunnel structure. Triggerfish are also swarming around the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, as well as on several inshore wrecks. Another great run of these aggressive fish is making anglers take notice. Triggers are easy to catch, and can save the day when the spades and sheepshead are not cooperating. Triggerfish will hit squid, clams, live bait, cut bait, or anything that is within easy reach.

Spanish mackerel are still dominating the trolling scene along the ocean front. The bigger fish are coming from shallower water on small spoons trolled at a quick clip. Most of the fish are ranging from 16 to 21 inches, but a few 3-pounders are also mixed in. The king mackerel scene is still slow, but a few reports of landed fish are trickling in. Expect this fishery to pick up later this summer and into the fall.

Drum are still on the loose in the lower bay, with red drum enthusiasts chasing large schools swimming on the surface along the Eastern Shore shoals lately. Anglers are also picking away at unassuming pods of black drum roaming the islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Storm lures and bucktails are working well.

Deep dropping is still an excellent choice, with quality blueline tilefish, golden tilefish, blackbellied rosefish, and nice grouper on the menu. A massive 20-pound, 10-ounce blueline tilefish became the new Virginia state record. Black sea bass are available on inshore wrecks and deepwater structures. Amberjack are still taking most any live bait offered on several offshore wrecks and at the South Tower. Take plenty of bait, and plan for an eventful day if you make the run south.

Offshore, the billfish bite is improving daily; good numbers of white marlin and a smattering of blues were crashing spreads this week. Further south, Carolina crews are finding a few sailfish. Nice yellowfin tuna are scattered in the same areas, and wahoo are becoming more common. School-sized bluefin tuna are still hitting on the inshore lumps, with the Fingers a favorite area lately. Some big dolphin are showing here and there, along with a few surprise mako sharks.

## **Virginia Middle Bay**

Roger, at Jett's Hardware, reports that the Spanish mackerel bite continues to improve. Metal spoons trolled at high idle speeds score the best bite. Those looking for Spanish mackerel can expect to see the occasional bluefish. Croaker and spot are around, but the bite is slow, and the sizes are small. The large croaker have moved out for the time being. Flounder are still around, but no report on the keeper throw-back ratio. Flounder are around the jetties at the mouth of the Potomac River.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, reported the following:

While there were no citations this week, spadefish were caught at the Cell and Wolf Trap this weekend. There have been recent reports of a lot of spades being caught at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Flounder fishing continues to improve somewhat. Reports from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel indicate a big increase in flounder activity, so we may see a decent run of fish. The creeks are full of croaker and medium spot. Trollers are catching Spanish Mackerel along Windmill Bar drop off mixed in with small bluefish. Pan-sized grey trout catches have been reported in the evening near New Point Comfort Light. An 11-year-old angler from Middlesex brought in a white perch caught from his grandfather's dock that was just shy of a freshwater citation.

## **Virginia Beach**

Staff at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center reported offshore landings of dolphin, 3 white marlin, one blue marlin, and a few bluefin tuna. The Scar area produced the most fish. At the Chesapeake Light Tower, one citation-sized amberjack was caught.

Good offshore fishing was reported from Paula at Fisherman's Wharf Marina. The white marlin fishing has been very good, and some anglers are still catching gaffer dolphin. The Norfolk Canyon in about 30 fathoms of water has produced well.

## **Virginia Piers**

At the Ocean View Pier, staff report nice catches of spot, croaker, and puppy drum. Nice-sized keeper flounder were also landed up to 25 inches.

Spot, croaker, some keeper flounder, and bluefish were hooked at the Lynnhaven Pier last week, along with a bunch of blue crabs.

At the Buckroe Fishing Pier, anglers found a mixed bag of croaker, spot, flounder, bluefish, black sea bass, and puffers. Several cobia were hooked as well. The largest was 32-inches.

## **Outer Banks, NC**

Offshore fishing out of Oregon Inlet has been good with catches of billfish and blue marlin, white marlin,

or sailfish flags showing up on many boats of the offshore fleet. The excellent dolphin fishing that kept many anglers happy the past few weeks has slowed up some, but anglers can still expect decent numbers along with yellowfin tuna, blackfin tuna, big eye tuna, wahoo, king mackerel, and bonito. Deep water bottom fishing still has been producing blueline tilefish, while snapper and grouper catches have been slowing down. King mackerel, and a few red drum continue to work offshore water in the 8- to 15-mile range. Nearshore fishing has been poor due to the lack of bluefish and Spanish mackerel. People fishing from the shore and piers in the Nags Head area have had the best luck looking for spot, puffers, and pompano. Some sheepshead and spadefish were found around the pilings of the piers. Fishing in Oregon Inlet has been good for flounder in the shallow waters around the local islands. The sound has seen speckled trout around the Washington Baum Bridge early in the morning and late evening. Bridge pilings have been good for spadefish, sheepshead, and black drum.

South of Oregon Inlet, Ramp 43 has been a hot spot with flounder, bluefish, and croaker. The red drum bite has been excellent on the south beaches and at Ramps 43 and 44. Sea mullet appear to be scattered for the moment, and trout and flounder were reported in the sound north of Buxton.

Fishing out of Hatteras Inlet continues to be headlined by the billfish. Many boats are having success, with a few slams reported in the mix. Other summer denizens offshore are not biting as well as they should be. Dolphin are around, but not in impressive numbers. Blackfin tuna and wahoo are also surprising a few anglers as well. Inshore fishing has been improving with good catches of speckled trout, bluefish, Spanish mackerel, and cobia.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.








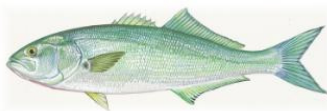
# ***ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!***

## **THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION**

***WANTS YOUR FISH....  
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

*You catch it, you fillet it,  
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,  
please donate them to science.*

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA	SHEEPSHEAD	RED DRUM	BLACK DRUM
			
TAUTOG	KING MACKEREL	SPANISH MACKEREL	BLUEFISH (GREATER THAN 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)
			

**In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a  
ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT,  
PER MONTH of the DONATION.**

**Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:**

**Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)  
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)  
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)  
Buckroe Fishing Pier (Hampton)**





# ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

## Get Hooked! Report at [www.vasaltwaterjournal.com](http://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com)

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.



The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

You will be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released.

On those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the number caught and a range of lengths. Reporting individual measurements on more highly prized species -- such as Red Drum, Striped Bass and Flounder -- provides a greater benefit for everyone.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions and type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal," and is found at [www.vasaltwaterjournal.com](http://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com).

A screenshot of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's Recreational Fishing Online Reporting website. The page has a blue header with the text "Virginia Marine Resources Commission Recreational Fishing Online Reporting" and the commission's logo. Below the header, there's a section titled "Virginia Recreational Assessment Program" with a fish skeleton graphic. To the right, it says "Recreational Saltwater Fishing" and "Welcome Jgrist,". There are two main content boxes. The first is titled "Red Drum Reports are Needed!" and contains text about collecting length data from red drum. The second is titled "New 2008 Tautog Regs" and contains a table of regulations. At the bottom left, there's a box with statistics for June 16, 2008.

Virginia Marine Resources Commission  
Recreational Fishing Online Reporting

Virginia Recreational Assessment Program

Recreational Saltwater Fishing  
Welcome Jgrist,

**Red Drum Reports are Needed!**

We are collecting length data from red drum that anglers catch-and-release. In 2009, there will be a coastwide (Virginia to Florida) stock assessment of the red drum population, and information is lacking on the catch-and-release of red drum outside of the management slot limit (18 to 26 inches).

**New 2008 Tautog Regs**

Closed Season	May 1 through June 24
Minimum Size Limit	14 inches
Possession Limit	4 per person

June 16, 2008

Members: 1,457  
Trips: 295  
Catches: 3,941

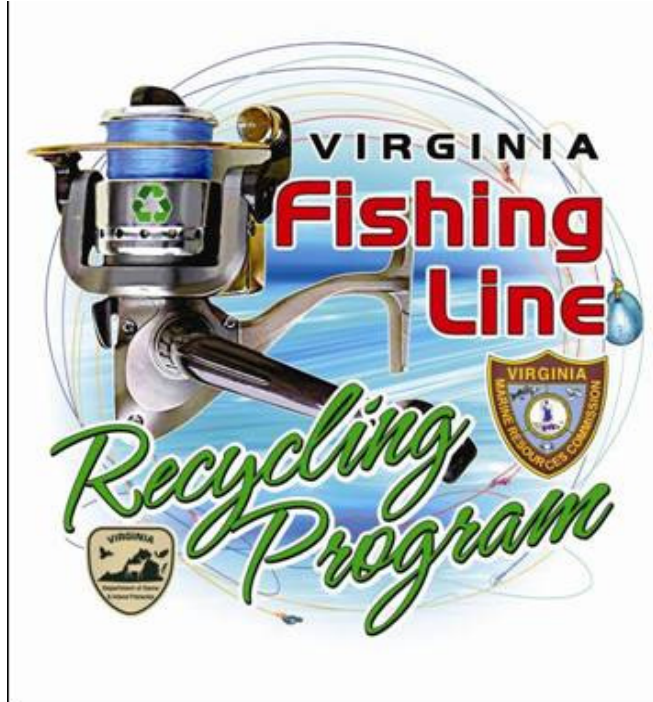
Related Links



# Introducing the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program!

- Please help keep our waterways cleaner and safer for:
  - fish
  - birds
  - marine mammals
  - boaters and swimmers
- Deposit used or tangled monofilament fishing line into specially marked containers!

## VMRC-Managed



## Locations!\*

Ocean View Fishing Pier, Norfolk

Long Bay Pointe Marina, Virginia Beach

Buckroe Fishing Pier, Hampton

Chris' Bait and Tackle, Cape Charles

Capt. Bob's Marina, Chincoteague



\*DGIF manages other locations throughout Virginia

The Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program is run jointly by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries with support from the Boat US Foundation.

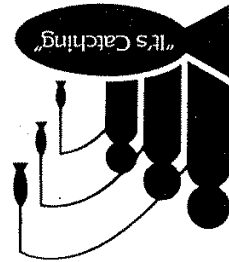
If you have any questions about the program, or suggestions for new container locations, please contact Alicia Nelson at (757) 247-2244 or email

[alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov](mailto:alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov).



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*Practice*

## CAREFUL CATCH

**REDUCE STRESS FACTORS THAT KILL FISH**

**Exhaustion \* Loss of Slime \* Wounds \* Time out of Water**